OEA/Ser.W

CIDI/doc.299/2020

15 October 2020

Original: Spanish

DRAFT RESOLUTION

THE CHALLENGES TO FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE AMERICAS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC UNDER THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PLAN OF ACTION OF GUATEMALA 2019

(Agreed upon at the meeting held on October 15, 2020)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

EXPRESSING its solidarity with and condolences to the people of the Americas who have suffered the adverse effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those who have contracted the disease, those whose livelihood the crisis has affected, as well as those who have suffered the loss of family members;

EXPRESSING AS WELL sincere gratitude and support for the dedication, efforts, and sacrifices of health professionals, sanitation workers, and other relevant front-line workers, beyond the call of duty, in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic;

DEEPLY CONCERNED about the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, threatening food security and nutrition in the countries of the Americas, including its disproportionate impact on women’s and girls’ health, education, and access to basic public services, and on social and financial services, which is deepening already existing inequalities, as well as poverty, extreme poverty, malnutrition and hunger, particularly among the most vulnerable;

CONSIDERING that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), estimates that even larger numbers of people in the region will fall into poverty, that the number of those affected by COVID-19 will increase, and that the number of those in extreme poverty could rise, potentially reversing the advances made in the last decade in terms of economic growth and sustainable development, in the fight against food insecurity and inequality, in access to education and health, among others. Also, aware that, the Global Report on Food Crises 2020, estimates that acute food insecurity and food crisis, has affected over 18.5 million people in eight countries of the region, and also mindful that the World Food Programme (WFP) alerted, that due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and containment measures, the number of food insecure globally may double, if action is not taken;

RECOGNIZING that the region has been characterized as the most unequal in the world, where the incidence of poverty and extreme poverty is higher among women, older persons, youth and children, as well as all persons in vulnerable situations and marginalized communities both rural and urban areas and that the situation of vulnerability is exacerbated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its multidimensional and unprecedented effects, including the serious disruption of societies, economies, the labor market, global commerce,  education, and its devastating impact on people’s livelihood and wellbeing;

DEEPLY CONCERNED that although rural women account for a high percentage of the region’s agriculture and food production and play an important role in ensuring food security and nutrition, they continue to live under conditions of social and economic inequality with challenges in access to land titles, credit and technical assistance;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the  respective commitments made by member states in relevant international and inter-American instruments to which they are party,  such as the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Protocol of San Salvador), the Social Charter of the Americas and its Plan of Actionand the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights of the United Nations, as well as the mechanisms and other instances existing in the Inter-American System, such as the Rapporteurship on Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the "The Working Group for the analysis of the national reports provided in the Protocol of San Salvador, through which the preparation of progress indicators, reports and other activities provide tools to the States on the path to food security and nutrition’;

RECALLING the commitments emanating from the mandates of the Summits of the Americas, aimed at strengthening the agri-food sector in a sustainable, comprehensive, inclusive, and competitive manner that contributes to achieving food security and nutrition, fighting undernutrition, and in particular chronic undernutrition, and promoting science-based nutritional policies that are culturally appropriate for our peoples;

REAFFIRMING support for international technical cooperation on agriculture through the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), as well as the determination to complement our capacity building, innovation, inclusion and sustainability efforts, in the agriculture and food sector across the hemisphere;

REITERATING the importance of family farming, especially by women and youth in rural areas, in developing countries to achieve food security and nutrition, reduce poverty, and mitigate the effects of the pandemic in food and agriculture;

ACKNOWLEDGING that certain countries’ geographic location and climatic conditions, including susceptibility to natural disasters, inadequate arable land, and poor natural water supply, among others, militate against agricultural production and the achievement of food security and nutrition, particularly in, but not limited to, small island and low-lying coastal developing states. This situation can be improved with measures that introduce new and emerging agricultural technology including climate-smart agriculture with capacity building support for domestic reforms and policies, which require technical and financial support from international financial and development institutions, where appropriate;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the urgent need to accelerate action at all levels and from all interested parties with the ultimate aim to achieve the vision and the goals of the 2030 Agenda, especially the 2nd Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 2) “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”, which considers that hunger and malnutrition represent major obstacles to sustainable development and that governments can design public policies to consolidate measures, strategies, and policies to eliminate hunger and all forms of malnutrition and to achieve food security and nutrition as a priority, and fulfil the commitment to leaving no one behind and to reaching those who are furthest behind;.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT AS WELL that, although the world is in the second half of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025),countries still face tough challenges to achieve food security and nutrition, especially in the context of the effects of the pandemic;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic the adoption of social protection measures is vital to address the dual challenge of mitigating the pandemic’s immediate economic impact and rebuilding the livelihood of populations, especially the most vulnerable, and that through public-private partnerships and the private sector, among others, could bring relief to a large number of individuals whose food security and nutrition is at risk;

RECALLING that in the Inter-American Declaration of Social Development Priorities in the Field of Social Development, “Overcoming Multidimensional Poverty and Closing the Gaps in Social Equity: Towards an Inter-American Agenda for Social Development,” and in the roadmap represented by the Plan of Action of Guatemala 2019, ‘‘Overcoming Multidimensional Poverty and Bridging Social Equity Gaps: Towards an Inter-American Agenda on Social Development,’’ the Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Social Development (REMDES) recognized the value of social protection programs in the eradication of child hunger and malnutrition in the Americas and the pledge to continue supporting these efforts through inter-American cooperation and institutional strengthening for government agencies, civil society organizations, and other social actors responsible for implementing these programs;

CONSIDERING the recent regional and sub-regional initiatives, that address the problems of food security and nutrition, inclusive development and those related to attention to the COVID-19 pandemic, for the strengthening of the resilience of food security and nutrition through social protection mechanisms; the uninterrupted operation of the value chain, production and access to food by the population through transparent international trade consistent with the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules; and the promotion of sustainable agriculture and food systems within the region that meets the needs of the population, protects the environment, respects the food habits and cultures of the hemisphere;

RECOGNIZING the work on food safety, by Member States, based on scientific evidence, to protect and preserve the health of all people throughout the supply and consumption chain of agricultural products. Moreover, it is important to recognize the essential service of workers in agriculture and food supply chains, and support them to continue their essential work in a safe manner;

RECALLING that the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), in its session of November 26, 2019, on “Child Malnutrition in the Americas”, had presentations on public policies, programs, and initiatives, in reducing malnutrition, particularly chronic malnutrition in different contexts of the region, discussing the main challenges confronted by countries and institutions, identifying the lines of regional cooperation between and among countries, to facilitate the transfer of knowledge, lessons learned and best practices, as well as successful policies;

RECOGNIZING the efforts to date that the Member States have made to face the emergency generated by COVID-19 and to meet the most pressing needs of food security and nutrition of populations in vulnerable situations; and convinced that the COVID-19 pandemic provides, Member States, civil society, the private sector, academia, and other relevant social actors, the opportunity to collaborate in policies, plans, and programs of assistance and social protection, in the eradication of hunger and chronic undernutrition to better prepare our societies to deal with future crises and achieve the objectives set forth in this resolution;

TAKING NOTE that the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), jointly stated that, to date, there is no scientific evidence that the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted through food or food packaging and that it is highly unlikely that people can contract COVID-19 from food or food packaging.;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that, in many OAS member states, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, agricultural production was already adversely affected by natural disasters and climate change[[1]](#footnote-1)/, reducing food security and nutrition, increasing unemployment and poverty, displacing persons; and that COVID-19 has worsened their conditions;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the importance of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), small and medium size family farming, in food security and nutrition and economic development.

RESOLVES:

1. To request the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity (SARE) to promote, in collaboration with the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) making use of the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN) to strengthen national social development institutions, in collaboration with international organizations, growth, development, and prosperity experts, civil society, the private sector, and academia responsible for combating poverty, reducing inequality with integral focus, expanding social protection and promoting social programs to eradicate hunger and malnutrition in the fight against food insecurity, through actions aimed at dialogue, capacity building, and the exchange of knowledge and lessons learned, as well as technical assistance and monitoring of indicators related to these issues.
2. To encourage member states to actively participate in the three working groups included in the Plan of Action of Guatemala 2019 and in the activities organized by the Secretariat for Access to Right and Equity to implement the Plan of Action of Guatemala 2019, prioritizing on the agenda of the Working Groups the issues of food security and nutrition and the reduction of poverty and inequality, among others.
3. Encourage Member States to keep value chains open and connected so that international markets can continue to function, supporting the flow of agricultural products and inputs, which play a key role in avoiding food shortages and thus achieving global food security and nutrition, as well as that the emergency measures related to agriculture and agri-food products designed to confront COVID-19 are specific, proportionate, transparent and temporary, and do not create unnecessary barriers to trade or interrupt supply chains for agriculture and agri-food products. We resolve to limit any unjustified restrictive measures on agricultural commodities or food supply.
4. To invite Member States, Permanent Observers, and other donors to contribute to the “Fund for the implementation of the Plan of Action of Guatemala 2019”, to the extent of their capacities, with the aim of securing resources in the shortest term, to finance cooperation and technical assistance for activities in support of the efforts of Member States, to respond to the serious consequences of hunger and malnutrition in the Americas, which is now being aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. To encourage the General Secretariat to support the efforts of small island and low-lying coastal developing states, among others, to request technical and, where appropriate financial assistance from International Financial Institutions and Development Agencies, combined with domestic reforms and policies to facilitate new and emerging agricultural technology, including climate-smart agriculture and capacity building support. This is in light of their limited areas of arable land, poor water supply, in some countries, and the importance of improving food security and nutrition of small and medium size family farming, school farming, subsistence farming and fishing, and farming by women and youth in rural areas.
6. To request the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity (SARE), in coordination with the Inter-American Committee on Social Development (CIDES), and in collaboration with the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) and other relevant Secretariats, to implement this resolution with the purpose of facilitating and strengthening dialogue, cooperation, and the exchange of experiences capacity building and technical assistance that benefit Member States in the unprecedented context, of the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. To encourage the General Secretariat, through the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity (SARE) and, in collaboration with the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), and other relevant Secretariats, and in coordination with the Joint Summit Working Group, the Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute (CARDI), the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), among others, to develop and strengthen cooperation projects to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the issues in this resolution.
8. Request that the General Secretariat, through the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity (SARE), and in collaboration with the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) and other relevant Secretariats, prepare and present in a joint session of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) and the Permanent Council a follow-up report on best practices and lessons learned by the Member States, as well as to recommend lines of action within the remit of this resolution.

FOOTNOTE

* + - 1. …of its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement to the United Nations on November 4, 2019. The withdrawal will take effect one year from the delivery of the notification.

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1. . The United States notes that references to climate change and/or the Paris Agreement are without prejudice to U.S. positions. The United States notes that it submitted formal notification… [↑](#footnote-ref-1)